



Treasury Security Manual – TD P 15-71

Chapter III
Section 16

Destruction of Classified and Sensitive Information

Updated
6/17/11

1. Destruction Process

Classified information approved for destruction shall be completely destroyed to thwart retrieval and to prevent recognition and reconstruction. Approved destruction methods vary depending on the type of media used, e.g., for paper documents, burning, cross-cut shredding, wet-pulping, and pulverizing. For other classified media examples include: melting, degaussing, and chemical decomposition. The methods (and options) may be limited within a particular state, county, or municipal area. The type of destruction selected by Treasury/bureau components shall be appropriate to the local jurisdiction or area and might restrict the actual method that may be used.

- a. *Destruction of Top Secret Information.* Top Secret information shall be destroyed in the presence of two cleared individuals; one person performs the actual destruction and the other person serves as a witness. Both individuals shall sign the *Classified Document Certificate of Destruction*, Treasury Department Form (TD F) 15-05.5. The completed TD F 15-05.5 shall be maintained on file for a three-year period after which it may be destroyed. No record of the destruction of the certificate is required.
- b. *Destruction of Secret or Confidential Information.* Secret or Confidential information does not require a destruction certificate. Non-record classified information such as extra copies and duplicates, including hand-written notes, preliminary drafts, and other material of similar temporary nature, shall also be destroyed by burning, mulching or shredding as soon as its utility is expended. No records of such destruction are required.
- c. *Destruction of Sensitive Information.* Sensitive information shall be destroyed in the same manner as Secret and Confidential.

2. Approved Destruction Equipment

The following are approved types of equipment for destroying hard-copy (paper) classified information and classified information on electronic/magnetic media:

- a. *Cross-Cut Shredders.* Treasury/bureau destruction of classified paper media shall be performed using one of the high-security cross-cut shredders listed on the National Security Agency (NSA), Central Security Service (CSS) evaluated products list at http://www.nsa.gov/ia/guidance/media_destruction_guidance/index.shtml. Note that inclusion of a product on this list is not an endorsement by NSA, Treasury, or the U.S. Government. End users are encouraged to contact the shredder manufacturers

and distributors for help in selecting the equipment best suited to their individual requirements and to accommodate the anticipated volume of classified paper media to be destroyed.

Treasury/bureau users of cross-cut shredders are encouraged to dispose of the residue in several waste baskets, bins, or receptacles. The shredded paper should be distributed as such because the shredding process itself is not the final disposition. The shredded paper is still disposed of in some manner depending upon the location and the mode of waste removal that is used in each facility.

- b. *Burn-bags for Temporary Storage.* Secret and Confidential information to be destroyed may be torn and placed in sealed opaque containers commonly designed as “burn-bags.” Burn-bags appear with the words “burn” or “classified waste,” or feature multiple alternating groupings of red and white diagonal stripes.

Use of burn-bags to store Top Secret information, pending final destruction at a later date, is not authorized.

Burn-bags awaiting destruction must be protected while in the end-users custody. The protection includes the user having a direct “line of sight” or “field of control” over the bags, depending on the office configuration. Burn-bags shall only be collected and contents destroyed by cleared contractor personnel or facilities maintenance personnel, and/or persons authorized by Treasury/bureau security officials.

When not in active use, burn-bags containing classified waste shall be protected commensurate with the level of classified contents and be secured at the close of business in a General Services Administration (GSA)-approved security container, (or until October 1, 2012 in a bar-lock cabinet). Burn-bags containing classified information may also be stored within a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) or security-approved open storage area pending collection by authorized personnel. Burn-bags containing classified information that are located outside a SCIF or open-storage area must not be left unattended at any time.

- c. *High-Security Disintegrators and Degaussers.* NSA produces a list of high-security disintegrators for disposing of paper/plastic/punched-tape material at <http://www.nsa.gov/ia/files/government/MDG/EPL-Degausser25February2010.pdf>.

NSA also produces a list of degaussers for disposing of magnetic media. Specifications concerning appropriate equipment and standards for destruction of other storage media may be obtained from GSA.

- d. *Electronic Media and Equipment.* Technical guidance on destruction (methods, equipment, and standards for disposing) of classified electronic media and processing equipment components may be obtained through Treasury's Office of Security Programs (OSP). Specifications concerning appropriate equipment and standards for destruction of other storage media may be obtained from GSA.